

Region 8



Volume 2, Issue 1
Spring 2004

EPI-WATCH

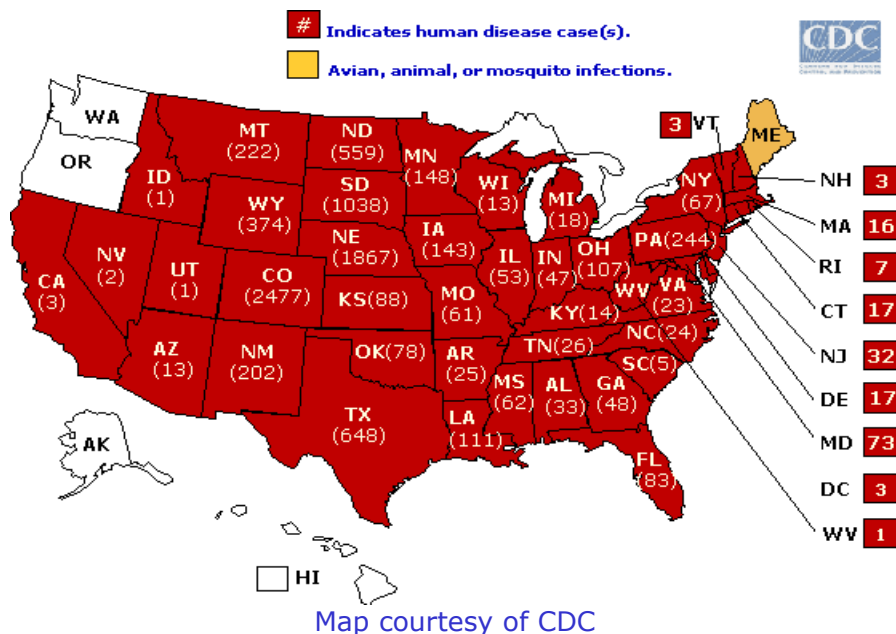
The Epidemiology Newsletter for Region 8

Region 8: Benton-Franklin Health District, Klickitat County Health Department, Walla Walla County Health Department, Yakima Health District

Hot Topics in Communicable Disease

REGION PREPARES FOR 2004 WEST NILE VIRUS SEASON

Since first appearing in New York during 1999, West Nile Virus (WNV) has spread across the United States with an amazing speed. As of January 2004, there are only four states that have not experienced WNV, including Washington State.



WNV belongs to the Flavivirus family and is commonly found in Africa, West Asia, and the Middle East. It is transmitted from the bite of an infected mosquito causing mild to severe illness in birds, horses, and humans. The risk of WNV to humans is relatively low, a great number of people will experience little to no symptoms. There is an increased risk of WNV infection during the summer and early fall months, as this is when people will typically have outdoor activities. Symptoms of a mild WNV infection include fever, headaches, mild body aches, nausea, and vomiting, usually lasting for a few days. However, in a few cases, the symptoms may become serious, including include high fever, headaches, neck stiffness, disorientation, tremors, coma, convulsions, muscle weakness, paralysis, and numbness. These symptoms may last several weeks and neurological effects may be permanent. People over the age of 50 are at a greater risk of developing the serious symptoms of WNV.

Beginning in March 2004 and continuing through the end of the WNV season, the Region 8 Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response (PHEPR) office will hold monthly meetings to discuss strategy, policies, and current issues relating to WNV surveillance and response. Clinicians, nurses, veterinarians, government and public health professionals are encouraged to attend. If interested, please contact Leslie Koenig at (509) 586-0673, extension 4 or at lesliek@bfhd.wa.gov.

For additional online information and resources, go to the Washington State Department of Health West Nile Virus page at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/Zoo/WNV/WNV.html>.

Q FEVER IN BENTON COUNTY

A confirmed case of Q Fever was identified in Benton County in late 2003. Typically, there are fewer than 2 cases Q Fever reported annually in Washington State. The agent is a rickettsial organism, *Coxiella burnetii*. Acute clinical features include fever, chills, headache, muscle pains, hepatitis and pneumonia. Chronic Q fever typically manifests itself as endocarditis. The incubation period is typically 8 days (range 5 to 15 days). Untreated, the case-fatality rate is 1% to 2%.

Diagnosis by laboratory criteria involves isolation of *C. burnetii* organism or specific antigen or nucleic acid detection in sera. There are a variety of animal reservoirs of Q Fever, including sheep, cattle, goats, cats, dogs, some wild animals, birds, and ticks. Transmission occurs via contact with animal placental tissues, birth fluids, animal processing plants, and in research facilities using live animals. Also, the consumption of unpasteurized dairy products, including raw milk, has been linked to Q Fever transmission. In rare instances transmission can occur in recipients of tissue and blood products from donors infected with the Q Fever organism.

Treatment for Q Fever is doxycycline and administration depends whether the case has the acute or chronic form of the illness. Intervention and control measures include determining animal and travel exposures, as well as notifying blood or tissue banks if the case is a donor or recipient of these products.

Important Notifiable Condition Reporting Phone Numbers and Local Health Jurisdiction Contact information for Region 8

To report a notifiable condition in:

Benton & Franklin Counties:

Benton-Franklin Health District
(509) 547-9737

Walla Walla County:

Walla Walla County Health Department
(509) 527-3290

Klickitat County:

Klickitat County Health Department
(509) 493-1558

Yakima County:

Yakima Health District
(509) 249-6541

Online Resources

Benton-Franklin Health District:

<http://www.bfhd.wa.gov/base/index.php>

BFHD Communicable Disease Statistics:

<http://www.bfhd.wa.gov/bio/epi.php>

Klickitat County Health District:

<http://www.klickitatcounty.org/health/>

Walla Walla County Health District:

<http://www.co.walla-walla.wa.us/Departments/health/health.htm>

Yakima Health District:

<http://www.co.yakima.wa.us/health/default.html>

Washington State Department of Health:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/>

WSDOH Notifiable Conditions:

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/Notify/list.htm>

For further information and for requests on obtaining this newsletter, comments, and article submission, please contact:

Ron Largusa
Region 8 Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response
Benton-Franklin Health District
100 N. Fruitland, Suite D
Kennewick, WA 99336
Phone: (509) 586-0673, Ext. 2
Fax: (509) 582-0164
ronl@bfhd.wa.gov

Region 8 Staff

Harvey Crowder DVM, MS, Regional Emergency Response Coordinator
Barbara Andrews BS, RS, Disease Surveillance Specialist--Yakima
Leslie Koenig MPH, Regional Learning Specialist
John Franco MPH, Epidemiology Response Coordinator
Ron Largusa MSPH, Epidemiologist